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23 February 1978Spotlight on the CIA**'Intelligence Follies'  
still plays to full house****By COL. R.D. HEINL JR. USMC (Ret.)  
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Surely it must rank as a major irony in that continuing extravaganza, "The Great Intelligence Follies," now approaching a four-year run in Washington, that James Angleton, the most feared American counterspy of this century, moralistically dismissed by the CIA for too effective use of his remarkable talents, should have been promptly summoned to Canada when it turned out that a third of the Russian embassy staff there (13 persons) were KGB agents trying to infiltrate the counterintelligence division of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).



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But the irony is even greater than the above suggests: Angleton, whose major catches included Kim Philby, Britain's top MI6 officer who defected to Moscow, was not called to Canada to participate in the final kill, as might have been the case five years ago — but to appear in Toronto as a TV panelist.

**IF ALL THIS SEEMS** slightly nutty, consider events of the last fortnight in Washington, which has been the scene of another intelligence morality play taking the form of the unveiling of another executive order which the Carter administration smugly proclaims as further restricting and publicizing — "taming" is a word you hear — the essential operations of the CIA and other intelligence agencies.

Nothing is said, nor is anything in fact to be said, as to whether the new procedures and organization improve or sharpen American intelligence functions. Improving our intelligence or lengthening its reach is neither the aim of this administration nor of Congress.

The questions being asked by the CIA's powerful enemies — Vice-President Walter Mondale, for example, and his anti-intelligence deputy from Senate days, David Aaron — are whether U.S. intelligence capabilities have been sufficiently curbed, blunted and blinded.

The executive order includes two unwelcome, unnecessary curbs: further Congressional oversight, and a supervisory role by the attorney general over certain operations.

Congress, whose dismal track record in intelligence oversight has included leakage or intentional disclosure by publicity-seeking members of virtually every intelligence secret entrusted to its hands since 1975, needs no enhanced role in these matters. A more prudent intelligence policy for Congress would be that enunciated by the late Sen. Richard Russell, D-Ga., to "close our eyes and vote the money."

As for the attorney general, his function appears to be that of signing off on the legality and constitutionality of everything the CIA and other intelligence agencies may seek to do. How ridiculous. Anyone with a grain of experience in the game of nations knows that the reason great powers have intelligence machinery is to accomplish vital secret objectives which are outside or beyond the law.

Indeed, President Carter, of all people, has just given us a startling, some might say a welcome, demonstration to just that effect when, in order to apprehend a U.S. Information Agency (USIA) officer suspected of espionage on behalf of Communist Vietnam, he turns out to have approved warrantless, nonstatutory electronic surveillance required to make the case and permit arrests.

Two provisions of the executive order make refreshingly good sense:

1. Despite maximum pressure, Mr. Carter has wisely refrained from canonizing his ambitious Annapolis classmate and controversial director of the CIA, Adm. Stansfield Turner, as a Cabinet-level, all-powerful intelligence czar. Attaining Cabinet status has been one of Turner's main objectives since first appointment. Now he seems farther from it than ever.

A monolithic, Turner-style intelligence organization designed to give the President and vice-president what the director thinks they want to hear, rather than the facts, would have been extremely dangerous.

2. Fortunately, Defense Secretary Harold Brown — again despite Turner's strenuous efforts — continues to retain jurisdiction over the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the code-breaking National Security Agency (NSA), the National Reconnaissance Agency (our satellite intelligence system) and the military services' intelligence functions.

**THESE COMPRISE A LARGE** proportion of our total intelligence capability, and provide independent voices, sometimes minority voices, the President should always hear without being filtered or muffled by an intelligence czar.

But there are some things — my father, a wise old Washington newspaperman for 50 years, used to say — that need a good letting alone, and U.S. intelligence now is one of them. No more executive orders, no more empire-building reorganizations, no more high-handed mass dismissals, no more witch burning, no more prosecution of loyal intelligence officers and FBI agents, no more congressional meddling.

A soothing infusion of presidential trust and support and confidence, and long overdue statutory protection against disclosure of intelligence sources and methods — these are agenda items we should be thinking about today.

Regarding "oversight," that trendy word and concept, which implies broadside disclosure of everything we are about to do, we might well listen to George Washington, who wrote in 1777:

"The necessity of good intelligence is apparent & need not be further urged. All that remains for me to add is, that you keep the whole matter as secret as possible. For upon Secrecy, Success depends in a kind, and for want of it,